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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses an ecological approach to training educators for urban schools which focuses on learning to develop and nurture collaborative relationships with parents and communities. It argues that the construct of collective efficacy is the missing link in understanding and implementing successful linkages between schools, parents, and communities. The paper suggests that preparing teachers, counselors, and administrators for work in the nation's urban schools involves training them in the importance of designing educational goals and programs that reflect linkages between homes, schools, and communities. The paper discusses collective efficacy and specific outcomes that may be sought when students, parents, school professionals, and community advocates work together for proactive learning experiences. It concludes that fostering beliefs of collective efficacy must begin with preservice education. If preservice teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to form linkages and create nurturing support systems for themselves and their students, they will know when, how, and where to begin the process. Appendix A presents a course syllabus designed for preservice teachers that reflects goals which prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to engage in collaborative relationships with schools, parents, and community advocates. Appendix B presents a bibliography. (Contains 18 references.) (SM)

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Collective Efficacy in Urban Schools: Linking Home, School and Community Resources

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Abstract

The authors discuss an ecological approach to training educators for urban schools which focuses on learning to develop and nurture collaborative relationships with parents and communities. They argue that the construct "collective efficacy" is the missing link in understanding and implementing successful linkages between schools, parents, and communities. The authors conclude with the presentation of a course syllabus designed for preservice teachers. The course reflects goals that prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to engage in collaborative relationships with schools, parents, and community advocates.

Introduction

Our purpose is to present an ecological approach to urban education which has as its primary tenet "collective efficacy"--educators, parents, and communities believing that as a social unit they possess the knowledge and skills to overcome obstacles to students' educational attainment.

We argue that preparing teachers, counselors, and administrators for work in our nation's urban schools involves training them in the importance of designing educational goals and programs which reflect linkages between homes, schools, and communities. Educational agendas which utilize resources from these three entities provide safety nets for students where values for learning are endorsed in the home, nourished in the schools, and rewarded in the communities.

We will focus on two primary goals. One, we will discuss collective efficacy and specific outcomes that may be sought when students, parents, school professionals, and community advocates work together for proactive learning experiences. Secondly, we will introduce a course syllabus for preservice teachers designed to provide a theoretical and practical understanding of developing home, school, and community linkages.

Assumptions

Several assumptions serve as guideposts for this discussion:

1. One of the greatest challenges for urban educators is finding solutions to address the underachievement of urban students (Ford, 1993, Ford, 1996).
2. There is a paradox of underachievement. Mickelson (1990) suggests that African American youngsters may endorse the idea of the importance of a good education, but this value is not reflected in actual academic performance. We believe this contradiction between attitude and subsequent academic performance exists among many urban youngsters.
3. Urban students' endorsements of achievement values may be compromised by the overwhelming influence of mass media's glamorization of counterculture ideals and lifestyles. The endorsement of achievement values may also be compromised by peer pressure to remain loyal to perceived cultural values and mores (Ford, & Harris, 1996).
4. Urban educators cannot address this paradox of underachievement nor can they address the competing influence of countercultures by themselves. Solutions must include the interacting influence of the home and the community. Linkages between homes, schools, and

communities must be formed so that the education of urban youngsters cannot slip through the cracks.

5. Traditionally, education and community liaisons have addressed urban issues in an erratic, haphazard, and uncoordinated fashion. More importantly, these efforts lack a conceptual framework for understanding of the end goal for student development and achievement.

6. Collective efficacy (Bandura, 1995) provides this conceptual framework for organizing and motivating schools, homes, and communities to work together for optimal student achievement.

7. Understanding, observing, and experiencing collective efficacy must begin with preservice education.

Collective Efficacy

Social Cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986) recognizes the necessity of observing the interdependent nature of personal, behavioral, cognitive, and environmental influences to understand human functioning. One of the primary personal-behavioral constructs is self-efficacy. Self- efficacy may be defined as one's personal belief--personal convictions about his or her capacity to self-motivate, plan, organize, execute, and control specific courses of action to achieve specific goals (Ozer & Bandura, 1990). One's sense of self-efficacy for attainment of specific tasks affects motivational, cognitive, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1990; Bandura, 1995;, Gredler, 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

When people have high self-efficacy about achieving a task, they will persist at the task when successful achievement is not readily at hand. High self-efficacy also helps people to view novel tasks as challenges rather than as personal threats to self- esteem. Finally, self-efficacious individuals are able to picture themselves succeeding at attaining a goal and they want to set future goals that are ambitious and problem-solving oriented.

Bandura (1995) refers to "collective school efficacy" in his discussion on the importance of teachers' collective belief system. This belief system involves teachers' convictions that collectively they have the necessary skills to help students achieve academic goals. Collective school efficacy also implies the need to actively involve parents and other caring adults in the educational planning of students. (Bandura, 1993). In effect an interdependent relationship

develops: Staffs who have high collective school efficacy positively influence parental involvement, which in turn increases the collective efficacy of the educators (Bandura, 1993).

For the purposes of our discussion, we define collective efficacy as a belief system that includes the mutual recognition of the various agents (e.g., home, school, and community), that each unit has a valuable and distinctive role in promoting success identities-- and together--and only together, do they have the capabilities to create environments conducive for the optimal development of the student. We believe that the attainment of collective efficacy is the first step for home, school, and community liaisons. A second vital need is a collective understanding of desired student outcomes.

Bandura's research has derived several measures for assessing self-efficacy beliefs for several areas of human functioning (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinzed-Pons, 1992). Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorellis (1996) investigated the diverse influences of self-efficacy beliefs on student academic performance. In their assessment of self-efficacy beliefs, they identified three primary components of efficacy beliefs: Perceived academic self-efficacy, perceived social self-efficacy, and perceived self-regulatory self efficacy. Adapting descriptors of these factors, we propose the following student outcomes for optimal development and achievement in learning environments:

Academic Self-Efficacy

1. Beliefs about capability to learn different academic subjects (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996).
2. Beliefs about ability to utilize study skills, time management skills, and test taking skills.
3. Beliefs about ability to self-motivate and delay more pleasurable activities when homework is due.
4. Beliefs about ability to use cognitive strategies to understand, learn, and memorize information.
5. Beliefs about ability to actively participate in class without experiencing feelings of embarrassment and rejection.
6. Beliefs about capacity to set and achieve challenging academic goals.

Social Self-Efficacy

1. Beliefs about capability to establish and maintain positive peer relationships.
2. Beliefs about ability to manage interpersonal conflicts.
3. Beliefs about ability to engage in positive social activities.

Self-Regulatory Efficacy

1. Beliefs about ability to resist negative peer pressure to engage in life threatening activities (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996).
2. Beliefs about ability to think independently.

For the purposes of our discussion about the needs of urban youngsters we add Cultural Self-Efficacy:

1. Beliefs about ability to recognize possible roadblocks and subtle undercurrents that will influence personal goals.
2. Beliefs about ability to negotiate a success identity and maintain a resilient racial identity.

Linking Home, School, and Community

Academic, social, self-regulatory, and cultural efficacy provide the theoretical backdrop for developing a collective belief system about ideal student outcomes. Once this understanding is communicated, accepted, and achieved (as counselor educators we view school counselors as primary liaisons to facilitate the process of collective efficacy), school personnel, parents, and community advocates can work, plan and execute courses of action. The following are sample interventions within each student outcome that can be provided for students from school, home, and community resources.

Parents

Academic Efficacy

1. Conceptualize ideas and strategies for student projects.
2. Utilize parental knowledge of youngster's learning capabilities to either impact strategies for remediation or to consult with teachers.

3. Structure home environments to make it conducive for learning.

Social Efficacy

1. Create opportunities for children to interact with positive peers.
2. Model ability to evaluate and develop strategies for resolving interpersonal conflicts.

Self Regulatory Efficacy

1. Continually reinforce the value of learning.
2. Recognizes the need for assistance and actively pursue external guidance when necessary.

Cultural Efficacy

1. Accepts, teaches, and values the family's history of survival.
2. Invests in the development and sustenance of youngster's success identity.
3. Shares talents, skills, and resources with school.

Teachers

Academic Efficacy

1. Acknowledges and confronts assumptions and presuppositions about the urban learner.
2. Utilizes teaching strategies to address varied learning styles.
3. Teaches across the curriculum five self regulatory skills (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996):
    a. Time planning and management skills
    b. Text comprehension and summarization skills
    c. Classroom note taking skills
    d. Test anticipation and preparation skills
    e. Writing skills
4. Informs parents about instructional goals, procedures, and expectations.

Social Efficacy

1. Reinforces positive peer interactions and positive resolutions to interpersonal conflict.
2. Teaches positive social skills.
3. Models positive interpersonal skills.
4. Encourages cooperative learning in the classroom.

Self-Regulatory Efficacy

1. Reinforces student internal locus of control.
2. Teaches students how to apply problem solving strategies to personal and interpersonal issues.

Cultural Efficacy

1. Constructs class assignments activities, and evaluation procedures that promote student success identities.
2. Generates resource people, films, field trips, and class assignments which promote resilient racial identities.
3. Designs instructional strategies that reflect diverse learning styles and priorities.

School

Academic Efficacy

1. Develops and promotes guidance programs, strategies, and processes which focuses on positive psychosocial adjustment, and positive achievement.
2. Facilitates referral processes to provide and to provide services to students and families.
3. Provides extended day and evening parent conferences and meetings to work with parents to devise academic goals for student achievement, to explain curriculum, and to provide materials and resources to help students at home.

Social Efficacy

1. Provides guidance strategies, activities, and opportunities for students to learn prosocial skills.

2. Uses opportunities to reinforce the use of prosocial conflict resolution skills.

Self-Regulatory Efficacy

1. Develops and/or initiates inservice training for teachers and parents on how to encourage proactive responses to student high risk activities.

2. Develops initiatives for outreach to successful institutions to share possible educational strategies.

Cultural Efficacy

1. Recruits and provides mentors, seeks settings for promotion of positive goal development and encourage site visits for successful role identification.

2. Actively embraces and communicates an ideology of success/achievement through positive reinforcement of cultural identity.

3. Develops and provides school programs (e.g., student orientation programs, career days), which demonstrates an inclusive representation of diverse career, vocational, and educational personnel and settings.

4. Assembles an integrative advisory team who are versed in cultural manifestations of symptomatology.

Community

Academic Efficacy

1. Participates on advisory boards which promote assertive educational involvement.

2. Shares and educates teachers, parents, and students about expectations in the world of work.

3. Designs work policies which will allow parents to interact, plan, and work with the school on the learning needs of their children.

Social Efficacy

1. Sponsors programs which promote positive peer interactions.

2. Sponsors programs for parents on child rearing and discipline, stress management, communication, and other identified needs.

Self Regulatory Efficacy

1. Communicates, models, promotes, and reinforces ethical, and responsible citizenship.

2. Exemplifies in real terms, the abstract principles of civic irresponsibility and articulates the negative consequences of civic responsibility.

3. Lobbies for programs that support after-school and weekend structured activities for students and families to counteract high risk behaviors.

Cultural Efficacy

1. Provides mentors which reflect the cultural diversity of the community.

2. Generates mass communication methods to promote, prize and acknowledge the accomplishment of urban students and families.

Where to Begin: Preservice Education

The course we propose for preservice educators, "Collective Efficacy in Urban Educational Settings: Linking, Home, School and Community Resources" (see Appendix A), has as its primary purpose to increase awareness of, and exposure to, urban students and families, and to gain a theoretical and practical understanding of collective efficacy. We recommend the course be taught within certain parameters: (a) taught in a full service school setting, (b) team taught, including but not limited to, teacher educator, counselor educator, school counselor, social service agency representative, and community advocates as deemed appropriate, (c) assignments and projects which require reflective thought, individual and group problem-solving, and experiential activities, (d) instructional strategies that include lecture, small and large group discussion, long distance learning, guest speakers, field trips, readings and interviews.

Conclusion

Fostering beliefs of collective efficacy must begin with preservice education. Once first year teachers have begun their career, too often it is too late to help these professionals

incorporate a visionary and empowered perspective. Observing veteran urban teachers rush from their cars to the school building in the morning, and rush to their cars in the afternoon, communicates the message that urban teachers are working in hostile and rejecting environments. Exposure to discouraged, fearful, and resigned experienced teachers may overwhelm the most optimistic of beginning teachers.

However, if preservice teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to form linkages and create nurturing support systems for themselves and their students, they know, when, how, and where to begin the process. Most importantly, they are aware of how to find the rich resources of our urban communities. Keith (1996) speaks to the richness of culturally diverse urban communities by stating..."even the poorest urban neighborhoods have knowledge, capacities, and interests, and not only deficits and needs. Such knowledge and capacities can and should be part of the foundations on which we build programs and organizations" (p.255). This level of awareness begins with preservice education.

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Appendix A

Syllabus

Collective Efficacy in Urban Educational Settings: Linking Home, School, and Community Resources

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine the interrelationships between students' physical, psychological, and cultural development. Family, school and other social psychological environments are studied in terms of collective efficacy and its impact upon behavior. Particular emphasis will be on providing educators an understanding of the development of effective linkages with home, school, and community resources for influencing optimal student development.

Readings

(see Appendix B)

Objectives

Upon completion, students will be able to

Knowledge

1. Examine the influence of the home, school, and community on the psychological characteristics of children and youth.
2. Examine the influence of family crisis on the psychological characteristics of children and youth.
3. Examine major social issues and crises confronting families as they interact with schools.
4. Learn the etiology and criteria of major childhood and adolescent emotional and behavioral disorders and how to work with home and community resources to plan for educational goals.
5. Acquire the information necessary to successfully engage in consultation with teachers, administrators, and parents on the mental health needs of students.
6. Understand the individuality and cultural uniqueness of an educational community.
7. Understand the role of the school counselor, and school/community human services professionals.
8. Learn resources of urban communities.
9. Learn how community resources can interface with schools to provide services to students and families.
10. Define the following terms:

cultural resources	self-efficacy
legal resources	collective efficacy
economic resources	academic efficacy
people resources	social efficacy
civic resources	self regulatory efficacy
linkages	cultural efficacy

11. Recognize the contextual organization of "family" and how teachers can profit from that involvement.
12. Describe the ecological model for educating children and youth.
13. Learn social cognitive theory and its relevance to the understanding of motivation and collective efficacy.

Skills

1. Demonstrate the ability to consult with those who are involved with student welfare (e.g., parents, teachers, pupil personnel workers, community agencies and court systems) on the educational, social and personal needs of students.
2. Demonstrate appropriate referral and follow-up procedures for students and families requiring educational and community services.
3. Design and implement appropriate intervention methods and techniques for assisting students who have behavioral difficulties.
4. Design and implement classroom guidance activities which facilitate positive mental health.
5. Demonstrate the ability to execute appropriate role and function when serving on intervention teams.
6. Identify and assess cultural resources.

Dispositions

1. Demonstrate an appreciation of collective efficacy.
2. Demonstrate an appreciation for working with counselors, administrators, parents, social agencies, civic organizations and court systems to create effective linkages for effective student outcomes.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of the value laden issues in the educational arena related to urban populations.
4. Demonstrate a value base that recognizes the importance of working with parents, pupil services specialists, and community resource personnel to promote multicultural understanding and respect when addressing the needs of urban children and youth.
5. Demonstrate a willingness to respectfully consider varied theoretical and clinical approaches to meeting the cognitive and affective needs of students.
6. Demonstrate the ability to appreciate the contribution of teachers, counselors, family businesses, community organizations, and court systems to the educational process.

Topical Outline

1. History of Urban Education
   The Urban Learner: Myth, Reality, and Possibility
   Self-Efficacy and Self Regulated Learners
   Central Focus: Collective Efficacy: Definition, Theory, Application

2. Social Cognitive Theory: Self-Efficacy and the Self-Regulated Learner

Ecological Theory and Practice
Application to the Urban Learner
Central Focus: The Role of the Teacher in Developing Self Regulated Learners

Collective Efficacy and Developing Self-Regulated Learners

3. Central Focus: The Role of Pupil Services Specialists (School Counselor, School Psychologist, Nurse, Special Education)

4. Emotional and Behavior Disorders Defined
The Role of the Teacher, The Role of the Family
Central Focus: The Urban Learner: Misunderstanding, Misdiagnosis, Miseducation--Building Academic Self-Efficacy

5. Emotional and Behavior Disorders (ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder): Developing Self-Regulated Learners
Central Focus: Forming Intervention Teams. Building Self Regulatory Self Efficacy

6. Emotional and Behavior Disorders: Anxiety Disorders
Central Focus: Collective Efficacy: The role of the Court System

7. Emotional and Behavior Disorders: Depressive Disorders
Central Focus: Collective Efficacy: The role of Social Service Agencies

8. Emotional and Behavior Disorders: Habit Disorders
Central Focus: Building Social Self-Efficacy

9. The Comer Model
Central Focus: The Family: Increasing and Developing Meaningful Parental Involvement: Building Cultural Self Efficacy

10. The Comer Model
Central Focus: Creating the Paradigm, Creating the Linkages

11. Completing the Cycle and Retrospection: The Role of the Preservice Teacher

Grading

Criteria for Projects

1. Clarity, written expression, grammar
2. Logical presentation and defense of ideas
3. Depth of Thinking (application, analytical, synthesis)
4. Creativity
5. Overall presentation

Evaluation

Examination 1 (25 points)
Examination 2 (25 points)
Group Orientation project (25 points)
Reflective Assessment project (25 points)

Scale

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
0-59 = F

Group Orientation Project

Maximum number per group: 8

Purpose of Project:

1. Study and experience the individuality, resourcefulness, and cultural uniqueness of urban communities.

2. Gain a practical understanding of collective efficacy.

3. Experience and articulate the contributions of teachers, pupil personnel specialists, families, businesses, community organizations, and court systems to the educational process.

4. Engage in meaningful dialogue and problem solving with colleagues on the role of teachers in creating collective efficacy in urban education.

Instructions. Respond to the following questions and activities. Responses may be presented in writing, and/or video productions (gain permission), multimedia, brochures, charts, or most forms of print and non print media. You are responsible for generating and constructing meaningful, precise (what, where, how, when, who) and relevant questions for the interview. You will be evaluated on the quality of your success.

Part I: The School

1. Provide the name of the school and its location.
2. Give demographic information about families attending the school (e.g., socioeconomic data, cultural/ethnic background, employment, etc.)
3. Provide significant historical data about the school (e.g., forced busing, change in racial composition, state and federal programs).
4. Provide description of school's organizational structure, curriculum emphasis, facilities, equipment, library, and faculty professional data.
5. Survey the Pupil Personnel Services provided, including role and function, referral and follow-up procedures.
6. Interview the Principal, emphasizing leadership style, management style, administrative issues.
7. Interview representatives from Parent Organizations.
8. Assess parental involvement in the school.

Part II: The Community

1. Interview representatives from:
   social service agencies

civic groups (choose groups that are representative of cultural diversity)
courts
local businesses (choose organizations that are culturally diverse)
worship facilities
hospitals
newspapers
support groups

2. Fine Arts: Identify festivals music, art, drama, and athletic events and opportunities.

3. Leisure Activities
Parks and playgrounds, Boys and Girls Clubs, Camps, Midnight Basketball, etc.

Note: Based on your information in Part II, identify and assess the current involvement with your school (e.g., how do families receive information about community resources and how are they encouraged to participate?)

Part III

Design a model of the current linkages you observe between home, school, and community.

Design a paradigm for desirable linkages based on the notion of collective efficacy.

Project
Reflective Assessment

1. Discuss the concept of self-efficacy and its relevance and applicability to the academic, personal, and social development of the urban learner.

2. Describe what procedures you would use to facilitate self regulatory learners in your classroom.

3. Select one of the behavior disorders discussed in class and explain what steps you would take to maintain or enhance students' self-efficacy for a particular subject area.

4. a. Discuss the concept of collective efficacy and its relevance to you as a potential urban educator.
   b Discuss how you would use the concept of collective efficacy in your classroom.
   c. Discuss how you would use the concept of collective efficacy as it relates to your discussion of question 3.

5. Critique an article which examines an area of family crisis relevant o urban populations. Discuss its implications for you as a potential urban educator. Include in your discussion the implications for collective efficacy.

6. a. Describe the teacher's role as consultant to parents and as a participant on intervention teams.
   b. As an educator, how would you involve PPS services?

7. Based upon your readings and class activities, how would you evaluate, change and/or enhance the Comer Model for school reform?

Appendix B

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